

Statement on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Decolonization in Research

The Office of Research Services supports our Western University community by advocating for and enabling exemplary research through building a culture of research excellence. We strive to empower our scholars and artists by providing them with the necessary tools, resources, supports, and professional services to foster research success and meaningful impacts. We recognize the pivotal role equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization (EDID) plays in achieving our unit goals and fostering an environment where innovation, creativity and scholarship are elevated.

It is imperative that we embrace and support the integration of inclusive, decolonial and anti-racist approaches within our research initiatives and ecosystem^{1,2,3,4}. Purposeful inclusivity is critical, as diverse research teams yield more innovative discoveries³ and demonstrate heightened problem-solving capabilities through the integration of varied approaches and thinking⁴. Moreover, research that actively centres marginalized and under-engaged communities shows higher societal impact, given increased relevance and responsiveness to current societal needs.

The Office of Research Services is deeply committed to integrating EDID principles into every aspect of our services, supports, and practices. Through consultations, resources, training and connections, we provide expert guidance on how to embed EDID considerations into research, ensuring our community embraces inclusivity and diversity in their scholarly and creative pursuits. These principles are at the core of our [Mobilize for Impact!](#) strategic plan, reinforcing our dedication and commitment to fostering a research environment that is inclusive as well as ethically and socially responsible.

To achieve our goals, we must first acknowledge that research spaces, participation, and practices have included, and still include, numerous barriers that limit the full participation of marginalized and under-engaged groups, partners in the research environment, and incorporation of non-Euro western centric perspectives. [The Canadian Tri-Agency Statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\)](#) has acknowledged such barriers and formulated [The Canadian Tri-Agency EDI Action Plan \(2018-2025\)](#)⁵ outlining steps to address these in our research ecosystem.

Our Commitment

To begin making progress, The Office of Research Services commits to working with our community to identify barriers in the research ecosystem both at Western and beyond that hinder the full involvement of equity-deserving groups and perspectives aiming to strategically mitigate said barriers. We fully endorse [The Canadian Tri-agency EDI Action Plan](#), and [The Dimensions Charter](#)⁶, a program jointly administered by the Canadian Tri-Agencies that invited postsecondary institutions to increase research excellence, innovation, and creativity through greater incorporation of EDID principles.

Specifically, we commit to:

- Reviewing our internal strategies, policies, and procedures through an EDID lens and making improvements to foster a more inclusive research environment.
- Offering capacity building opportunities to support the Western research community in understanding and creating inclusivity within their research programs, faculties, units, and teams.
- Ensuring that our research unit, as a workplace, embraces EDID practices, including diverse talent recruitment and retention.
- Establishing awards, in collaboration with key units, to recognize and celebrate scholars from equity-deserving backgrounds as well as research scholars who make significant contributions to the improvement of equity, diversity, inclusion and decolonization in their research outcomes as well as research practice.
- Collaborating with key units on campus, such as the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, the Office of Faculty Relations, and the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, to proactively advance EDID efforts in research and related activities. This includes ethical research engagement with all communities, notably equity-deserving groups such as Black, Indigenous and other racialized and under-served communities, recognizing and challenging colonial practices, and working with partners to promote equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization in all programs, services, and funding initiatives we support.

The Office of Research Services acknowledges the power of the collective voice in addressing systemic inequalities. To achieve progress, we need dedication, investment, and collective action. The Office of Research Services works in partnership and shares its deep commitment to EDID with its local research partner, [Lawson Health Research Institute](#) (the research institute of [St. Joseph's Health Care London](#) and [London Health Sciences Centre](#)).

References:

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2. Hofstra B. et al. The diversity-innovation paradox in science. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci.* 2020;117:9284-91.
3. Nielsen, M. W. et al. Opinion: gender diversity leads to better science. *Proc. Natl Acad. Sci.* 2017;114: 1740-2.
4. Herring, C. Does diversity pay?: race, gender, and the business case for diversity. *Am. Sociol. Rev.* 2009;74: 208–224.
5. Tri-Agency EDI Action Plan for 2018–2025: https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/_doc/EDI/EDI-ActionPlan-EN.pdf
6. Dimensions Charter: https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/InterAgency-Interorganismes/EDI/EDI/Dimensions-Charter_Dimensions-Charte_eng.asp